

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OSLO 05394 301721Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-05 SP-02 INR-07 NSC-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 /047 W

-----010454 302049Z /63

R 301523Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4847

INFO US MISSION US NATO 2302

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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E.O. 11653: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, NPG, PARM, NO

SUBJ: GON SHIFTS TO POSITION ON ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEAD (ERW)

REF: A(A) OSLO 4870 (B) OSLO 4657

1. FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND, WHO HAD INITIALLY HOPED TO AVOID TAKING ANY PUBLIC STANCE ON THE ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEAD (REFA), HAS NOW SOUGHT TO ADDRESS THE "NEUTRON BOMB" QUESTION SOLELY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF BROADER DISARMAMENT ISSUES.

2. IN THE COURSE OF HIS NOVEMBER 23 ADDRESS TO THE STORTING, IN WHICH FRYDENLUND OTHERWISE LIMITED HIMSELF LARGELY TO RESTATEMENTS OF EXISTING GON POLICIES, HE FINISHED HIS REMARKS ON DISARMAMENT WITH A REFERENCE TO THE ONGOING NATO TALKS ON THE ERW. HE STATED THAT IN THESE TALKS, "NORWAY HAS PLACED DECISIVE EMPHASIS ON THE EFFECTS WHICH A POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEUTRON BOMB IN THE AMERICAN OPERATIONAL UNITS IN WESTERN EUROPE WOULD HAVE ON THE NEGOTIATIONS ON DISARMAMENT AND CONFIDENTIAL

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ARMS CONTROL. THE NUCLEAR POWERS' CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ARMS REPRESENTS AN ADDED DANGER FOR HUMANITY. DURING THESE CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS IN THE NATO COUNCIL THE GOVERNMENT WILL URGE THAT THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS MUST REACH AGREEMENT ON PUTTING A STOP TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ARMS AND THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB MUST BE DULY

CONSIDERED IN THIS CONTEXT."

3. IN A SUBSEQUENT TV INTERVIEW ON NOVEMBER 28, FRYDEN LUND, WHEN QUESTIONED ON THE NEUTRON BOMB, MERELY RESTATED IN BRIEF HIS NOVEMBER 23 STATEMENT AND AVOIDED AMPLIFYING COMMENT.

4. MFA SECRETARY GENERAL KRISTIANSEN, IN A NOVEMBER 29 DISCUSSION WITH DCM AGREED THAT THE FRYDENLUND STATEMENT REPRESENTED A CHANGE IN GON THINKING ON THE NEUTRON BOMB. THE SHIFT, HE SAID, WAS NEGATIVE IN NATURE AND REFLECTED THE TENOR OF INTERNAL GON DEBATE ON THE ISSUE. DCM EXPRESSED THAT FRYDENLUND'S COMMENT MADE NO REFERENCE TO WEAPONS' MILITARY AND DEFENSEIVE ASPECTS WHICH AFTER ALL WERE NOT IRRELEVANT T THE DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE.

5. COMMENT: BY PLACING THE NORWY/NEUTRON BOMB QUESTION ENTIRELY UNDER THE DISARMAMENT CACHET (AND AVOIDING FORMULATION OF ANY GON POSITION ON DEVELOPMENT/ DEPLOYMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF A BROADER ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT), FRYDENLUND HAS PROVIDED THE GON WITH SOME PROTECTION FROM ASSAULT BY THE NORWEGIAN FAR LEFT. IN RECENT YEARS, THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S MOST VOCAL OPPOSITION HAS COME NOT FROM THE NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR NON-SOCIALIST FACTION, BUT, RATHER, FROM THE FAR LEFT, PARTICULARLY THE LEFT SOCIALIST (SV) PARTY AND ITS

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ALLIED. THE NEUTRON BOMB QUESTION, WITH WHICH SV (AND LABOR'S OWN LEFT WING) COULD ENLIST A BROAD SPECTRUM OF THE TRADITIONALLY ANTI-NUCLEAR NORWEGIAN PUBLIC, IS THUS AN IDEAL ISSUE FOR SV TO PUT IN PLAY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. FRYDENLUND'S MOVE TO PLACE THE NORWEGIAN ERW DECISION WITHIN A PURELY DISARMAMENT CONTEXT GIVES THE GON PROTECTION FROM ITS MOST HARSH CRITICS AND PROVIDES SOME HOPE THAT, IN TIME, THE QUESTION MAY BE DECIDED BY PROCESSES THAT DO NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVE THE GON. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, FRYDENLUND MAY HAVE MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR NORWAY TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY FUTURE ALLIANCE DECISION IN FAVOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEW WEAPON.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, WARHEADS, MDW
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Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977OSLO05394
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770444-0410
Format: TEL
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977114/aaaaacos.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 OSLO 4870, 77 OSLO 4657
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 521730
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GON SHIFTS TO POSITION ON ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEAD (ERW)
TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, PARM, NO, NPG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f5a53816-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009